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SAVA 73-65

2 May 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William E. Colby  
Executive Secretary  
Management Committee

SUBJECT : The Forgotten Class

1. I know that structuring and implementing any reduction exercise such as that which the Agency is currently carrying out are difficult, complex tasks which no matter how skillfully or compassionately pursued can never be executed to everyone's, or even anyone's, complete satisfaction. (Such exercises perforce involve people and judgments about people, on which there will always be some element of disagreement.) I also know that any system devised to execute such a program will soon break down if those who supervise it entertain out of channel appeals on individual cases.

2. Given the above, I am not here making any such appeal. There is, however, a class of officers who have been caught off base in this reduction exercise as a direct result of past Agency management practices which I do think merit the critical examination of you and others in senior command positions. The nature of this class and the management questions it highlights are illustrated by an individual case that, to my mind, constitutes an almost perfect paradigm.

3. The officer in question is [redacted] a GS-12 in his middle forties who has been with the Agency since March 1955 and was recently declared surplus. [redacted] started his Agency career in the Cartographic/Geographic Division of what is now OBGI. He left OBGI functionally in December 1965. Since then he has

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4. [ ] problem derives from the fact that although he left OBGI functionally in December 1965, he never left it administratively. Hence in recent weeks when OBGI was directed to cut, it took the entirely understandable position that an officer on its rolls who had performed no service for that office for more than seven years was patently surplus to its current needs. Thus [ ] got his letter. When he went knocking on other component doors, including the doors of the components for which he had actually been working, he found them shut tight from the inside. Again, this is human and understandable. A component purging people who are already on its administrative rolls is unlikely to compound its immediate problems by picking up persons who are not. Ergo, [ ] is out in the cold and, presumably, will soon be out of the Agency -- for which he has done everything asked of him and as a result of administrative arrangements in which he had little voice and over which he had no control.\*

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5. [ ] individual case is a specimen example of the problems of officers detailed for long periods of time out of what remain, administratively, their parent component. Such detailees constitute, collectively, a "forgotten class," defenseless and vulnerable in any reduction exercise such as that in which we are now engaged. If one examines the record, however, one usually finds lengthy

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details are rooted, not in the preferences or requests of the individuals involved, but in what at the operative time is construed, and advertised, as the "needs of the service." [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The DDI was engaged in something closely approximating a draft. Officers throughout that Directorate were strongly encouraged to "volunteer," with the usual glib -- and empty -- promises and assurances that their careers would never suffer thereby but, instead, their prospects for advancement and recognition would be greatly enhanced.

25X1 6. Many officers who responded to such calls, including Mr. [REDACTED] gravitated -- via their new assignments -- to duties, responsibilities and activities far removed from their original Headquarters niches. From the Agency's point of view, this was good and healthy. For the officers involved, however, it often was not. Frequently, the paperwork never caught up with what they were actually doing; their fitness reports were not written by (or significant to) the components against which their salaries were charged. At each point of assignment transfer, it was usually easier for the administrative component enjoying -- or about to enjoy -- the benefit of their services to duck the always tricky slot problem and grab another "freebie" by leaving them charged against the rolls of good old OBG/OCI/ONE/OER/O-etc., which was not squawking too loudly. Thus the Agency and the components for whom such officers were actually working benefitted greatly. The officers' nominal administrative parents, however, got stuck with the check, and when they can no longer absorb the bill, the officers find no room at the inn.

7. If we are going to encourage and, institutionally, enjoy the fruits of inter-component cross-fertilization, we are going to have to make radical changes in administrative practices that have become routine over the past decade. Any perceptive officer in today's climate with two eyes and an ability to use them would understandably be inclined to think that he/she would be an idiot to accept any detail save a training tour of short duration encouraged by his/her parent component and accompanied by an ironclad guarantee of early return

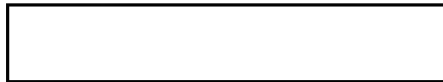
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to that component with enhanced skills of obvious and direct benefit to its parochial function. Nor would it be excessively cynical for any able young officer in today's climate to regard credence in career assurances accompanying urgent appeals to the "needs of the service" on a par with credence in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny or the Great Pumpkin.

8. I happen to believe cross-fertilization is of great benefit to the Agency and that we would profit enormously from encouraging the kind of shifts and functional movements early in an officer's career that facilitates his or her winding up in a sphere of activity to which she or he is optimally suited, regardless of the chance vagaries of the route by which that officer first joined the Agency or the route that led to his/her office of initial assignment. We cannot expect to encourage such cross-fertilization or reap its full potential benefits, however, unless we abandon administrative practices that make participation in such activity hazardous for the people involved and replace them with administrative procedures which reward, rather than penalize, our personnel for doing what we ask them to do.



George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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Attachments

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